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Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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accurate and complete as possible, parents insist on occupying its eyes and thoughts with things that are for the time being incomprehensible and repugnant. They do not see that only when his acquaintance with the objects and processes of the household, the streets and the fields is becoming totally exhausted, only then shall a child be introduced to new sources of information which books supply."*

Anyone reading the above condensed passage will see that the self-education which H. Spencer here commends is largely, and in its earlier stages, acquired wholly unconsciously.

Now let us see the results of a perverted or bad education of the unconscious from the same author: "What kind of moral culture is to be expected from a mother who shakes her infant because it will not take its food? How much sense of justice is likely to be instilled by a father, who, hearing his child scream because its finger is jammed between the window sash and the sill, begins to beat it?"

"Who has not seen a child repeatedly slapped by nurse or parent for a fretfulness arising from bodily derangement? Are not the constant and often quite needless thwartings that the young experience—the injunctions to sit still, which an active child cannot obey without suffering great nervous irritation, the command not to look out of the window when travelling, &c., signs of a terrible lack of sympathy."†

There are few of us but could extend these instances almost indefinitely; but enough have been given to show what is meant by the bad education of the unconscious mind. Here the education is given to the child probably unconsciously by the parent, and certainly the evil is absorbed unconsciously by the child; and when, in later years, it turns out a tyrant or a bully, there are few who will see that the source of this developed character is this early mal-education of the unconscious mind. And yet so it is.

Is there, then, to be no discipline in education? Certainly there is; but not where not needed, and not capricious and arbitrary in its character. What it should be we will speak of further on.

(To be continued.)

* Herbert Spencer, *Education*, p. 26.

† *Ibid.*, p. 98.

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF LITERATURE AND HISTORY.

BY H. A. NESBITT, M.A.

THERE are many points of view from which History may be studied; there is that of the lawyer, of the politician, of the economist, of the soldier, of the moralist; but the educationist has not to consider these special aspects of History. His object is to present to the pupils a picture of the men and manners of past times, to try and help them to realise in some degree the tone of thought, the standard of right and wrong, the views of life, the feelings and beliefs that prompted the actions of our forefathers. Often we find these actions incomprehensible to us unless we can throw off our own atmosphere of thought and put on, like a strange garment, the prejudices, the false theories, the ignorance on the one hand, together with the grim earnestness, the devotion to a high ideal, even if a mistaken one, the unflinching pursuit of what was deemed the right, on the other, which characterised the age we are studying. To do this the most obvious plan is to steep ourselves in the writings of the time, other than mere histories, and so to try to enter into the minds of men of other days. And here we are met with a constantly recurring difficulty. The men of action and the men of the pen have generally been not only different in personality, but have moved as it were in different planes of thought. Again and again we read books that were written at times of great events and are surprised to find how few and unimportant are the allusions to contemporary history. The writings of Alfred do not allude to the Danes. Layaman's *Brut* does not mention Normans or Barons. In the *Owl and the Nightingale* or *King Horn* or *Havelok the Dane* there is no allusion either to Crusades or to Civil troubles. Chaucer lived during the time of the French wars; he was himself a prisoner in France, he was contemporary with the great pestilence which took off one-third of the inhabitants of Europe, and depopulated whole parishes in England; the revolt of the peasants under Wat Tyler must have frightened him, together with the rest of the well-to-do classes, and yet Chaucer never mentions Cressy and Poitiers,

Bretigny or Guienne. He only refers once casually to the pestilence, and once to Jack Straw. Shakspeare does not even allow us to know whether he was a Catholic or Protestant (some have actually put forward the theory that he was the former); he does not mention the Armada; and his allusions to contemporary history are almost confined to the prophecy that Essex would be successful in Ireland and to a punning allusion to France as making war upon her *hair*.

The great struggle with Napoleon gave rise to a few stanzas in *Childe Harold*, three songs by Campbell, Scott's *Battle of Waterloo*, and a very few sonnets by Wordsworth, but most of Scott's, Byron's, Wordsworth's, Shelley's, Keats', and Moore's poems were uninfluenced, so far as direct allusion goes, by the great events of the time. It is in other directions than in direct allusion that we must look for light upon the study of History in Contemporary Literature.

To go back to the beginning. It is impossible to read the writings of Alfred, especially such portions as are original, without feeling an enhanced respect for the man himself, and for the rude but earnest warriors and priests among whom he lived. I am especially fond of the account of the voyage of Othere the Norseman, whom Alfred sent to explore the White Sea—

Extract from Alfred's *Orosius* :—

"Othere said to his lord, King Alfred, that he of all Northmen northmost abode. He quoth that he abode in the land northward over against the West Sea. He said though that the land was very long north thence; but it is all waste, but that in a few places dwell Finns for hunting in winter, and in summer for fishing by the sea. He said that he at a certain time wished to find how long the land lay to the north, or whether any man dwelt to the north of the waste. Then fared he northward by the land, left the waste land always on the starboard, and open sea on the backboard (larboard) three days. Then he was as far north as the whalehunters' furthest fare. Then fared he yet northward as far as he might in three more days' sail. There the land bent to the east (North of Norway), or the sea came in on the land, he knew not which, but he knew that he waited there for a west wind and somewhat north, and sailed then east by the land as far as he might in four days' sail. There he had to wait for a due north wind, for the land bent to the south, or the sea came in on the land, he knew not which (the White Sea). Then sailed he thence southward by the land as far as he might in five days' sail. There lay there a great river running up into the land. Then they turned at the river, for they durst not sail past the river for fear of war (unpeace); for the land was all inhabited on the other side of the river. He met before no inhabited land since he

from his own home fared, but had always waste land on the starboard, except for fishers and fowlers, and hunters, and they were all Finns, and he had ever the open sea on the backboard. The Permians had well cultivated their land and they durst not come there, but the Terfins' land was all waste except where hunters dwelt, or fishers or fowlers.

"Many tales the Permians told him both of their own land and of the lands that were beyond, but he knew not what was true, because he saw it not himself. The Finns, he thought, and the Permians speak nearly the same language. He fared thither chiefly, besides for the exploration of the land, on account of the horse whales (walruses—walross), because they have such noble bones in their teeth, and they brought one of the teeth to the king, and their hides are good for ship ropes. These whales are much less than other whales; they are not more than seven ells long, but in his own land is the best whale hunting—there they are eight-and-forty ells long, and the largest fifty ells long—of these, he said, that he with six others, slew sixty in two days.

"He was a very wealthy man in the property that their wealth consists of, that is in deer. He had yet when he sought the king of unsold deer six hundred. These deer they call reindeer. There were six steal-reins (decoy deer); they are very dear among the Finns, for they catch wild reindeer with them. He was among the first men in the land, but had not more than twenty cattle, and twenty sheep, and twenty swine, and the little that he ploughed he ploughed with horses (the Anglo-Saxon always used oxen); but his income is chiefly from the tribute that the Finns pay him. This tribute is in deer skins and birds' feathers, and whalebone, and in ship ropes made of whales' hide, or of seals' hide. Each pays according to his birth. The best born must pay fifteen martens' skins, and five reindeer skins, and one bear's skin, and two sacks of feathers, and a tunic of bear or otter skin, and two ship ropes; each is to be sixty ells long, whether it be made of whales' hide or seals'."

We feel in reading it that he belongs to our own race, that he is akin to our modern men of science in his simple love of truth for its own sake. We feel the childlike openness and modesty that are so characteristic of men of real greatness, Newton, Darwin, Livingstone.

In the next generation there is a fine battle piece which has been translated by Tennyson, *The Fight at Brunanburgh*. It tells us little about the battle except that at Brunanburgh, wherever that was, Athelstan defeated Anlaf, King of the Danes, and Constantine, King of the Scots, but we feel the stern exultation of the warrior; we feel that the men who fought there, the men who delighted in the poem, were the ancestors of those who fought at Waterloo or Khartoum. There is no love of fighting for its own sake, or for glory; they fight for their hearths and their homes, but they exult as Englishmen exulted over the Armada or

Trafalgar. The country was saved from the invader; that was the first thing, and the glory followed and was duly appreciated. I am very fond of a little verse, the only one left of a poem by King Canute—

“Merie sunge the muneches [monks] binnan [beside] Ely,
Tha [as] Knut King reu [rowed] therby,
Roweth knightes near the londe
Hear we thes muneches song,”

It shows us the gentle and refined side of the great warrior, and we feel that it suits well with the King to whom the wave story is attributed.

The Norman Conquest almost crushed English nationality for the time, but the Saxon chronicle lingered on till the death of Stephen, and we get a striking picture of the misgovernment of Stephen's reign, which in its helpless cry of anguish brings home to us how English courage and manhood had suffered by the superposition of the foreign race. There is no thought of resistance; there is only the belief that they might have been protected by King or by Heaven, and that both had abandoned them to their enemies.

Extract from *Saxon Chronicle*:—

“1137. This year fared King Stephen over sea to Normandy and was there acknowledged because they weened that he should be such as his uncle was, and because he had got his treasure, but he distributed it and scattered it completely. Much had King Henry gathered of gold and silver, and no good did his soul get of it. When the King Stephen came to England he held his court at Oxford, and there he took Bishop Roger of Salisbury and Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, and the Chancellor Roger, his nephews, and put them all in prison till they gave up their castles. When men understood that he was a mild man and soft and kind and did no justice, then they did all kinds of crime. They had done him homage and sworn oaths, but they kept no faith, they were all forsworn and lost their truth. For every rich man made castles and held them against him, and filled the land full of castles. They oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle works. When the castles were made they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those that they weened had any goods, by day and by night, men and women, and put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with unspeakable torture, for never were martyrs tortured as they were. They hung them up by the feet and smoked them with foul smoke. They hanged them up by the thumbs or by the heads and twisted them till they entered the brain. They put them in cells with adders and snakes and toads, and killed them so. Some they put into short, narrow, and shallow chests, and put in sharp stones and pressed the

men and broke all their limbs. In many of the castles were heavy chains that two or three men had enough to do to carry. These were fastened to a beam and they put a sharp iron about the man's throat and his neck, and he could not move or sit or lie or sleep, but that he bore all the iron. Many thousands they slew with hunger. I cannot nor may not tell all the crimes nor all the tortures that they did to all the wretched men in the land, and that lasted the nineteen winters while Stephen was king, and ever it was worse and worse. They made exactions on the farmhouses at their will, and called it taxation. When the wretched men had no more to give, they ravaged and burnt all the farms, and thou mightest well fare a day's journey and find never a man sitting in his farm, nor land tilled. Then was corn dear and flesh and cheese and butter, for there was none in the land. Wretched men died of hunger. Some sought alms that were once rich men. Some fled out of the land.

“Was never yet more wretchedness in the land, nor never heathen men did worse than they did, for everywhere they spared neither church nor churchyard, but took all the goods that were therein, and burned church and all together. They did not spare bishops' land, nor abbots', nor priests', but robbed monks and clerks and every other man that they could. If two or three came riding to a farmhouse, all the household fled, for they weened that they were robbers. The bishops and learned men cursed them ever, but they made naught of that, for they were all cursed and forsworn and abandoned.

“Where men tilled the earth it bare no corn, for the land was all ruined with such deeds, and they said openly that Christ and His Saints slept. Such and more than we can say we suffered nineteen winters for our sins.”

Then for half-a-century no word was written in English that has come down to us. We know that the English spirit was rising again, but all writings were in Latin or Norman French. It was in the time of John, when at length priest and baron, franklin and churl, joined together for the first time in a struggle for liberty, that English Literature again appeared. In the two works which mark the revival we find the two subjects which have ever possessed the greatest interest for Englishmen, patriotism and religion. Layamon tells in English verse the legendary story of Arthur, of the first coming of our ancestors to this country, “Who first held English Land,” and Orm gives in quaint rhythm without rhyme or alliteration an explanation of the Jewish ceremonies and their influence and meaning in the Christian ceremonies of his time.

“This bok is nemned Ormulum,
Forthi [because] that Orm it wrochte.”

After this the thirteenth century gives us tales of adventure, *Havelok the Dane*, *King Horn*, translated from the Trouvères,

which call for no remark except as pointing to the unfailing love for books of adventure among Englishmen.

These tales are the forerunners of Malory's *Arthur*, *Sir Bevis of Southampton*, *Robinson Crusoe*, &c., down to Marryatt and Stevenson. But it is in the fourteenth century, the time of Wyclif, Langland, Chaucer, that we feel we again get in touch with the England of the past in a way that we have not done since the time of Alfred. Wyclif, the father of political pamphlets, the forerunner of the modern press, with his fierce denunciation of abuses and his earnest endeavour to initiate reforms. Langland with his deep sympathy for the poor and his vivid pictures of the London of his time—of the tavern where Sir Piers of Pridie rubs shoulders with the ratcatcher and the scavenger, of the cookshops with their "hot pies, hot," and the geese and sucking pigs, the Sergeant of Law in his hood, and the Friars, "all the four orders," who preached to the people for their own profit, glozed the gospel and construed it as they would. But perhaps the most striking passage is the story of the rats and mice who wish to bell the cat.

Extract from *Piers Plowman* :—

"With that there ran a rout of ratones (rats) at once,
And small mice with them more than a thousand,
And came to a council for their common profit:
For a cat of a court came when he liked,
And overleapt them lightly and caught them at his will,
And played with them perilously and pushed them about.
'For doubt of divers dreads we dare not well look,
And if we grumble at his gaining he will grieve us all,
Scratch us, or claw us, and in his clutches hold
That we loathe our lives, 'ere he let us pass.
Might we with any wit his will withstand,
We might be lords aloft and live at our ease.'

(The rats were the Nobles, the cat was John of Gaunt, and the mice were the Commons).

A rat of renown, most reasonable of tongue,
Said for a sovereign help to himself :—
'I have seen fellows,' quoth he, 'In the city of London,
Bearing badges (collars) full bright about their necks,
Were there a bell on their badge, by Jesu, as I think
They might wit (know) where they went and away run,
And right so,' quoth that raton, 'reason me sheweth
To buy a bell of brass or of bright silver
And knit on a collar for our common profit,
And hang it upon the cat's hals (neck), then hear we may

Whether he rides or rests or runneth to play,
And if him list for to laike (joke), then look we may,
And peer in his presence while him play liketh,
And if he is wrath beware, and his way shun.'
All this rout of ratons, to this reason they assented,
And so the bell was bought, and on the badge hanged
There was no raton in all the rout, for all the realm of France,
That durst have bound the bell about the cat's neck,
Nor hang it about the cat's hals all England to win,
And held them unhardy, and their counsel feeble,
And let their labour (be) lost and all their long study.
A mouse that much good knew, as me thought,
Struck forth sturdily and stood before them all,
And to the rout of ratons rehearsed these words :—
'Though we killed the cat, yet should there come another
To scratch us and all our kind, though we crept under benches.
Therefore, I counsel the Commons to let the cat be,
And be we never so bold the bell him to shew,
For I heard my sire say, seven years past,
When the cat is a kitten, the Court is full elyng (sad).
(The kitten being Richard II.)

For better is a little loss than a long sorrow,
Than maze (confusion) among us all, though we miss a shrew,
For many men's malt we mice would destroy,
And also ye rout of ratons rend men's clothes.
But for that cat of that Court that can you overleap.
For had ye rats your will ye could not rule yourselves
I say for me,' quoth the mouse, 'I see so much after,
Shall never the cat nor the kitten by my counsel be grieved.'

* * * * *
"What this meteles (dream) meaneth, ye men that be merry
Divine ye, for I dare not by dear God in heaven."

Above all, however, does Chancer lift up the blanket of the dark and give us a peep of the English of Richard the Second's time. The courteous knight who :

"Never yet no vilainye ne sayde
In al his lif unto no maner wight."

The young squire, his son :—

"He was embrodered as it were a mede,
Al ful of freshe floures white and red."

The yeoman in green and the highborn nun who spoke French :—

"After the scole of Stratford atte Bow,
For French of Paris was to her unknowe."

And who was specially careful to eat delicately so that—
 “In her cuppe was no farthing seen,
 Of greasē when she drunken had her draughte.”

The monk who loved hunting better than his cell and when he rode—
 “Men might his bridle here,
 Gygling in a whistling wind as clere
 And eke as loud as doth a chapel bell.”

The friar who would willingly accept silver for his house and
 “Instead of weping and prieyeres,
 Men might give silver to the pore freres.”

The sergeant of law :—

“No wher so busy a man as he ther was,
 And yet he semed busyer than he was.”

The franklin or county gentlemen of whom he says ;—

“It snowed in his house of mete and drink.”

The doctor of physic who was somewhat fond of money :—

“For gold in physic is a cordial,
 Therefore he lovèd gold in special.”

The summoner, whose business it was to get people fined for non-attendance at church, and who when drunk always chattered a few words of Latin; the pardoner with his wallet, “bretful of pardons come from Rome al hoot,” and his bottle of pig’s bones which he palmed off as sacred relics, and lastly, the good parson of whom it was said

“But rich he was in holy thought and work.
 He maked him no spiced conscience,
 But Cristes lore and His apostles twelve
 He taught, but first he followed it himself.”

The promise held out by Chaucer of a great outburst of Literature was not fulfilled and the fifteenth century is singularly barren. With the exception of the Paston Letters and fragments of Caxton’s autobiographical introductions we have scarcely any writings giving colour to the times, and for this cause it is perhaps the dreariest portion of English History. In the sixteenth, Skelton’s *Why come ye not to Court?* gives us a graphic picture of the reputation in which Wolsey was held by his contemporaries.

Extract from Skelton’s “Why come ye not to Court?”—

“The Earl of Northumberland
 Dare take nothing on hand,
 Our barons be so bold,
 Into a mouse-hole they would
 Run away and creep
 Like a many of sheep
 For dread of the mastiff cur,
 For dread of the butcher’s dog
 Would worry them like a hog.
 Once yet again
 Of you I would frayne (ask),
 Why come ye not to Court?—
 To which Court?
 To the King’s Court
 Or to Hampton Court?—
 Nay, to the King’s Court.
 The King’s Court
 Should have the excellence;
 But Hampton Court
 Hath the pre-eminence,
 And York Place,
 With my lord’s grace,
 To whose magnificence
 Is all the confluence,
 Suits and supplications,
 Embassies of all nations.
 A straw for law canon
 Or for law common
 Or for law civil,
 It shall be as he will,
 Be it sour, be it sweet,
 His wisdom is so discreet
 That in a fume or a heat,
 ‘Warden of the Fleet,’
 Set him fast by the feet,
 And of his royal power
 When him lust for to lower,
 Then ‘Have him to the Tower,’
 Sans aulter remedy!
 ‘Have him forth by-and-by
 To the Marshalsea
 Or to the King’s Bench!’”

More’s *Utopia* by his descriptions of what Utopia was teaches us what London was not. In Utopia the houses in the towns had gardens, they had glass windows, they were built of hard flint or plaster or brick, and not

of "every rude piece of timber that came first to hand, with mud walls and ridged roofs thatched over with straw." We get similarly keen criticisms on the spirit of Government in his day. "The rich are ever trying to pare away something from the daily wages of the poor by private fraud and even by public law, so that the wrong already existing (for it is a wrong that those from whom the State derives most benefit should receive least reward) is made yet greater by means of the law of the State." "The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labour of the poor; and as soon as the rich decide on adopting these devices in the name of the public, then they become law." The result to the poor was "a life so wretched that even a beast's life seems enviable." In Utopia the public good is the one object of legislation; in Utopia the people were all well taught, while half the population of England "could read no English." In Utopia every man could be of what religion he would. He closes with the words:—"There are many things in the Commonwealth of 'Nowhere' which I rather wish than hope to see adopted in our own."

Spenser dwells apart in the realms of his own fancy, but in one of his minor poems he gives a striking description of the unfortunate suitor of Elizabeth's Court:—

"So pitiful a thing is suitor's state,
Most miserable man whom wicked fate
Hath brought to Court.

"Full little knowest thou that hast not tried
What hell it is in suing long to bide,
To lose good days that might be better spent,
To waste long nights in pensive discontent,
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow,
To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peers,
To have thy asking, yet wait many years,
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares,
To eat thy heart with comfortless despairs,
To fawn, to crouch, to waite, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
Unhappie wight, born to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend."

The *Faerie Queene* is full of political allusion, but it does not so much help us to understand the History, as it requires the History in order to appreciate the intensity of the poet's feeling. Shakespere has very little local colouring—"He was not for an age, but for all time"—but what he has is of course most vivid. The scene of the carriers in *Henry IV.*, the immortal Dogberry, the chaff of the cobbler in *Julius Cæsar*, the tavern scenes in *Henry IV.*, Justice Shallow in the *Merry Wives*, put us in touch with, at any rate, some part of the England of the time; but in Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher we get a great deal of the manners that have passed away. Bobadil the boaster, Tribulation Wholesome, and Ananias, Kastril, the Angry Boy, Zeal of the Land Busy, are types that we could with difficulty match nowadays. The vanity, the hypocrisy, the desire to ape the vices of those higher in station are still among us, but they take different forms. Of Milton, Wordsworth truly says;—

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

Yet we get in Milton the fiercest outburst of puritan indignation against the abuses of the Church—the passage of *Lycidas*, beginning—

"Last came and last did go";

ending with the mysterious

"That two-handed engine at the door,
Stands ready to strike once and strike no more";

that subsequent events seemed to render prophetic. And we have the highest puritan aspirations in the magnificent passage of the *Areopagitica*:—"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unsealing her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds with those that love the twilight flutter about, amazed at what she means."

Bunyan again troubles himself so little with current history that he does not even tell us on which side he fought in the great civil war, when at the siege of Leicester

the comrade, who had just taken his place on guard, was struck by a cannon ball; but in describing the trial of Christian before the Judge of Vanity Fair he scarcely caricatures the political trials of his time, which were on a par for fairness with the trial of ex-Captain Dreyfus. The consideration shown by the judge to the unconvicted prisoner was not less than that shown by Jeffreys to Richard Baxter or Alice Lisle.

Of Dryden it is not too much to say that one can hardly appreciate the politics of Charles II.'s time without reading *Absalom and Achitophel*, with its characters of Shaftesbury and Buckingham. Shaftesbury—

"Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A man to all succeeding ages curst,
For close designs and cruel counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfixed in principle and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace.

A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger when the storm was high,
He sought the storm, but for a calm unfit
Would steer too nigh the sands to show his wit."

And Buckingham—

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome,
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by turns and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chemist, statesman, fiddler and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy.
Railing and praising were his usual themes,
And both, to shew his judgment, in extremes,
So over violent or over civil
That every man with him was God or devil.
Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,
He had his jest and they had his estate.
He laughed himself from court, then sought relief
In forming parties, but could ne'er be chief;
For spite of him the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel.
Thus wicked but, in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of it was left."

Unfortunately the best idea of the manners of the upper classes of the Restoration period is to be obtained from the comedians, and they reveal such a depth of depravity, of love of vice for its own sake, and of revelling in wickedness, that we are glad to avoid the subject, and cannot but rejoice in the writings of Addison and Steele, who led the reaction against the fashion of immorality, and strove with success to make vice not only hateful but ridiculous. Addison's *Vision of Public Credit*, his *Visit to the Bank of England*, his forecast of what future ages will think of Queen Anne's reign, make us feel at home at once with the time of Queen Anne. Swift's *Journal to Stella* is, perhaps, scarcely literature. It was never intended to be published, but to a student of history it is fascinating. We see behind the scenes. We see the actors, Oxford, Bolingbroke, with their wigs off—we learn what they thought of while decisions were pending, and understand their hopes and anxieties. It is far more instructive than his *Conduct of the Allies*, or *History of the Last Four Years of Queen Anne*, which are mere party pamphlets.

Fielding and Smollett are invaluable in giving us a picture of English life in the last century, and it is a thousand pities that they are so spoiled by coarseness as to be unreadable by the young. It is curious to compare Macaulay's celebrated third chapter, especially the description of the country gentleman of the end of the seventeenth century, with *Tom Jones*, and to recognise how much of the picture is taken from "Squire Western." It is curious also to compare the account of the Expedition of Admiral Vernon in Smollett's *History of England*, with the account in *Roderick Random*, and to see how far more graphic and more valuable *historically* the latter is than the former.

As we approach our own times the need of literature to explain history diminishes, but the history, especially the chronology, are more and more required to explain the literature. Thus many of Wordsworth's sonnets are only intelligible when we know the dates at which they were written, and the same may be said of the political poems of Coleridge and Shelley. We all know the Battle of Hohenlinden; but it may not have struck us that Campbell does not say who won it, and when we remember that it

was a French victory over our allies, his silence becomes more eloquent than speech.

"Ye mariners of England,
Who guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze.
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe."

Who was the other foe? The date 1807 gives us the answer. It must have been written just before the sailing of the expedition to bombard Copenhagen: the new foe was Denmark. Moore's poem,

"When first I met thee warm and young,"

is supposed to be addressed by Ireland to the Prince Regent. Why was Moore so bitter? It was written in 1813, just after it had become evident that the Prince was going to prove as hostile to the Catholic claims as his father had been. The Prince had taken the reins of government in 1811.

In Horace Smith's *Address to the Mummy*, he says:—"The Roman Empire has begun and ended." This was written in 1813, and in 1806 Francis II., Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, had changed his name to Emperor of Austria. How often is the extract from *Childe Harold*, beginning—

"There was a sound of revelry by night,"

described as the Eve of the Battle of Waterloo, leading children to think that the Duke of Brunswick fell at Waterloo. The Duchess of Richmond's ball was on June 15th, the eve of Quatrebras, not of Waterloo.

To us elder folk who lived at the time, Tennyson's *Maud*, the *Charge of the Light Brigade*, the *Siege of Lucknow*, need no explanation; but to many young people the history of England from Waterloo to the times during which they have lived is a blank. They know the Wars of the Roses, but the Alma, Inkerman, Gettysburg, Gravelotte and Sedan, the Plevna Pass, the bombardment of the forts of Alexandria, Isandlana, Majuba Hill, familiar as they are to us, are almost entirely out of the scope of what they learn. I cannot but think that recent history ought, even in preference to the history of the Anglo-Saxons, to be more taught than it is, at any rate. Among the great gains to be derived from a close study of history is a fuller appreciation than we could otherwise obtain of the noblest literature that the world has yet seen.

REFORM SCHOOLS IN GERMANY.

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SELDOM has an educational movement excited such widespread interest, and given rise to such a mass of literature, as the agitation for School Reform in Germany. It has struck into the very core of the Higher School system, and seems likely to find general acceptance at no very distant date.

German educationalists have never been slow to recognize the fact that educational establishments only fulfil their functions properly as long as their methods and curricula are suited to the development of national culture. To this fact is due the birth of the Realschulen, which form such a prominent characteristic of the German School system of the present day; and to this fact too is due the feeling which is fast gaining ground, that the time has come when the curricula of the classical and semi-classical schools, the Gymnasien and Real-gymnasien should be revised, and the three types of higher schools, the Gymnasium, Real-gymnasium, and Realschule brought into more intimate connection by introducing a common Lower Division doing the same work into each school, postponing the commencement of Latin till the fourth school year, and Greek till the sixth school year. The question which lies at the root of the whole matter is in fact the possibility of combining a classical and modern education without detriment to either, and at the same time, without imposing too heavy a burden on the youthful mind.

As long as 260 years ago Comenius recommended a course of instruction based on principles similar to those which have actuated the leaders of the Reform School movement.

It was Comenius who insisted that a thorough training in the mother-tongue should precede the study of a dead language, that "realien" should form the main part of the education up to the age of twelve or thirteen, that the study of modern language should come before that of a dead language, and that the mental powers and natural inclination